

DISSECTION OF THE CAT I: SKINNING

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http://Biology.clc.uc.edu/Fankhauser/Labs/Anatomy_&_Physiology/A&P201/Cat_Skinning.htm

1. **LABEL BAG WITH YOUR TABLE NUMBER:** Place bag on a clean table with *end you will open to the left*. Attach a large **label at the lower right** of the bag with your table number written in large black marker letters.
2. **DRAIN THE FLUID:** At the sink, with rubber gloves, carefully cut open plastic bag close to the end so that it can be securely closed when finished. Remove cat into the sink so that excess preservative fluid drains away. Squeeze out excess fluid from the cat's fur by milking down from head to tail. Set aside the bag, keep outside clean and free of embalming fluid and cat parts...
3. **LIE CAT ON ITS BACK** on your desk. Note the three latex injection sites: 1) at the neck, 2) in the inner thigh, and 3) in the right lumbar region of the abdomen. These incisions will need to be considered during the following cuts. Try to include them in your incisions. Before you cut, make an illustration of the ventral view of your cat in your notebook with dotted lines showing where you are going to cut. (What do the three colors of latex indicate?)
4. **CUT ALONG THE VENTRAL ABDOMINAL MIDLINE, THEN ALONG VENTRAL SURFACE OF THE LIMBS:** Lift the skin just below the **xiphoid process**, snip a shallow cut with scissors. *All cuts should be made shallow enough so that underlying organs are not damaged*. Insert the rounded tip of the large scissors under the skin at the cut, lift the skin and extend the cut up to the neck, and down to the **pubic bone**, stopping just above the **genitalia**. Continue the cuts down the medial surface of the thighs to the anterior-surface of the leg, and out along the anterior surface of the forelimbs to the **dew claws**.
5. **CAREFULLY TEASE THE SKIN AWAY** from the underlying muscle (or bone) with a blunt instrument (fingers and thumbs work well). The cottony material which ties the skin down to the body is called **superficial fascia**. Watch the skin so that you leave all tissue on the body. If you come to a difficult area, work around and behind it for a better approach. Here are the problem areas to which muscle may adhere to the skin: **1) the flanks, 2) the neck, 3) the shins, and 4) the head**. Do not tear or remove underlying muscle.
6. **CUT AROUND EITHER SIDE OF THE PERINEUM TOWARD THE TAIL.** Cut through the skin between the tail and the anus to leave a ring of fur around the genitalia and anus (perineum). Make a cut along the ventral tail and peel back the skin from the tail. Continue skinning until the skin has been freed to the paws, cut the circumference of the skin around the limb. Do not cut the tendons of insertion in the wrists or ankles.
7. **SKIN THE HEAD** carefully. Feel for the **base of the ears** and cut through the canal just above the base. Leave muscles on the skull. Peel the skin until you feel the **rimms of the orbits**. Cut connective tissue around eyes. Cut to separate lips from upper and lower jaws. Leave the entire nose on the pelt by cutting deeply into the flesh of the nose.
8. **PUTTING IT AWAY:** To store your cat, pull skin over nose, wrap in proper position, place wrapped cat in the plastic bag, **press out the air**, twist the end, fold it over, secure with 2 or 3 turns of a rubber band. Place in box so the **numbers are in front right hand corner**.
9. **CLEAN UP!!** Wash dissecting tools thoroughly, dry them, replace in the kits, and return to their proper location in the drawer. Clean up *all* fur, fat, and stray pieces from your desk, floor, sink and surrounding counter. Wash all surfaces and edges *thoroughly* with a soapy sponge, picking up *all* hairs, and removing grease. Finally wipe to near dryness with a well-rinsed, wrung-out sponge. (Please do not waste paper towels for this step.)